



The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

● DECEMBER 1990

JESUS IS OUR PEACE



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DECEMBER 1990

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25 Years Ago!

It is true that in the course of adaption to a Christian environment there are elements that have to be discarded and there are others that have to be transformed. In some cases we should provide healthier motives for various occupations that are accepted in their pattern. In all these operations there are no short cuts or general rules that can be followed. We must evaluate each custom or mode of behaviour and make sure how much of it is of value for retention and how much should be rejected or transformed for the sake of the Christian climate we are anxious to provide.

—Churchman 1965

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Jesus himself our Peace



the rarest commodity in the world, the world as it is, the commodity that is more expensive than the most precious jewels is peace. Unfortunately peace is so fragile, so fragile so that it is broken every moment everywhere. We cry for peace. Somewhere on our planet peace is broken every day by individuals, by groups and by nations. Countless people break peace for countless reasons every day. The world is torn by war. We have become wary of war and war-torn. As if our cup of misery is not full, natural catastrophes strike our dear earth with cruel violence. The communal harmony, for which our country was once known, is at state.

There is no peace when the lives of the innocent, the poor and the deprived are not secured and protected. The peace and security are not just the concern of the state. They are principally that of all peoples. It is the people themselves who make peace and justice and realize them through mutual trust and understanding.

India is passing through a moment of deep crisis. The stability of parliamentary democracy which was built brick by brick by Mahatma Gandhi. Jawaharlal Nehru and many leaders has been shattered to pieces by the chain of events that rocked whole country. The spectre of casteism and communalism is showing up in all its fury, fouling social and political life. Whatever the origin of the caste system in our country was, today it is eating into the vitals of our

life. Castes were once supposed to have been structured on functional basis for the welfare of the community at large. The so-called functional basis is no longer valid. Yet, caste is a privilege for some and to others a curse. Although people do not, by and large, carry on the profession on functional basis of the caste, the bulk of them still maintain their separate identity and make a virtue of compartmental living, limiting marriages to their own groups and clans, breeding prejudices and hatred.

Even four decades after independence, the SCs and tribals continue to suffer from all kinds of disabilities, while those belonging to high castes corner the bulk of privileges and benefits. The high castes tend to unite among themselves only if it is to contain and hold under the boot the down-trodden who constitute an overwhelming majority. Peace and justice for people must include socio-economic security, religious and economic identity and fulfilment, as well as political freedom and safety from the oppressive forces.

The Church and its concomitant Christian identity is never removed and isolated from the world it finds itself in. When we talk about the need for strengthening the unity and integrity of the country, we should be honest about our own position in lending a helping hand. 'Unity is not an easy or simplistic concept amidst such diversity. The quest for unity has to be seen anew in terms of working and building-up together. To be faithful to unity the churches

must be sensitive to the barriers of various kinds within themselves. Without such a realisation the churches cannot progress towards an inclusive community with recognition for the ministry of all. Unity therefore calls for an understanding of our differences in a constructive way to recognise our role as part of a whole in the purpose of God. In such light, our denominational differences pale into shadow and our task as partners in the work and mission of God brightens our way together. Unless churches become truly one they cannot set any example and on the other hand, find solace in touch-me-not attitude to the realities and struggles of the people.

One week before the New Year we will be celebrating Christmas. It is important to realise that the event is God's greatest gift to mankind the gift of the Prince of Peace. The peace of God is the only authentic peace. It works with things as they are. Such peace the world cannot give and it cannot take it away either! 'God himself is our peace'. This is the message which we need to communicate to the disturbed world which once again will kindle the dying spark of hope and faith.

—DASS BA

We Wish You All

A very

Happy Christmas!



PEACE IN OUR LAND

Christmas Message

THE MOST REV. DR. P. VICTOR PREMASAGAR, *Moderator*

Christmas draws near and as our Church and Churches throughout the world are celebrating the Advent season, we await the coming of our Lord and with John, the forerunner, we cry out.

Maranatha—come O Lord.

The recent months have witnessed communal disharmony, religious fanaticism and violence throughout the land. The change of Governments at the Centre and the States, strife between the religious groups and the plight of the innocent sufferers in many of our cities and villages, terror and unabated violence in the communities who hitherto lived in peace and tolerance for centuries in this great land of ours. We pray for peace in our land, India, the land of great religions of the world, desperately seeks peace and understanding amongst its peoples.

The coming of the Messiah and the Kingdom of the Lord repeatedly proclaimed by the prophets, looked for a time when people turn their weapons of war into the implements of peace and production and the whole nature going to be transformed, the animals living together in peace and harmony and the nations of the world live in peace and goodwill towards each other.

As we celebrate Christmas 1990, we sing with the Angelic hosts, 'Glory to God in the highest, Peace on earth and goodwill towards the whole human community in whom God is pleased, because Jesus is born in Bethlehem. The meek and the lowly, the poor and the oppressed, the hungry and the handicapped need to be strengthened as part of fulfilment of the Kingdom of God.

The stories of Christmas tell us about the light that shone in the heavens by the appearance of the Star, joy of the Angelic hosts as they carolled across, the simple shepherd folk outside Bethlehem received the good news of the Birth of the Child, the wisemen from the East travelled far to bring gifts to the Babe in the manger, the traditional values of this world are turned upside down. As Mary the Mother of Jesus sang her magnificat, boldly affirming that the hungry will be fed with good things and the rich will be sent empty away, the mighty will be put down from the thrones and the poor

will be exalted (Lk. 1: 52-53). These expectations were realised in the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus and as the disciples and the early church witnessed to this power to the ends of the earth, the human community is called to the life of justice and peace, and working towards the integrity of creation.

In the midst of horror, pain and suffering of our people in the wake of communal riots and religious tension, the Church affirms the values of the kingdom, seeking blessedness through hungering after righteousness and peace, working towards reconciliation amongst the nations of the world. During this advent season we are reminded of the coming of the Lord in His glory, judging the world in the way in which we relate ourselves with the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the imprisoned and the sick and the suffering people in our neighbourhoods (Matt. 25: 31-46). The small communities everywhere engaging in acts of mission—sharing each other, caring for others and serving for the sake of the Lord.

The message of Christmas that God so loved the world, that He gave Himself, His all, for the transformation of men and women into the very children of God. I call upon all our Churches and congregations to share the message of Christmas in concrete ways, sharing with others. May the peace and joy of Christmas be ours and may the New Year be a year of renewed obedience, to the Lord who was and is to come in glory again. I suggest three things that we all could do as part of celebrating Christmas this year.

1. Spend not on ourselves but on those who do not have.
2. Share the story of Christmas with our neighbours through the world, song and visual presentation.
3. Every congregation celebrates Christmas, caring for the poor and the oppressed the widows and orphans and those who suffer persecution, comforting those in sorrow and bereavement in our neighbourhood.

Wish you a happy Christmas and a Joyous New Year.

Christmas in Bethlehem

DR. SAROJINI HENRY, *Madurai*

A flock of ivory woolled sheep graze among the scattered olive trees and wild anemones on the edge of the Judean hillside. The scene is the Shepherd's Field, named in honour of the Shepherds who were watching their flocks by night on that first Christmas Eve. There is a cave hidden in the secluded corner of the field; its ceiling is blackened by the smoke from the fires kindled by wandering shepherds and from the candles left burning by pious tourists. It was at this spot that, centuries ago, angels had proclaimed the good news of the Saviour's birth to the shepherds, singing 'Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, goodwill toward men'.

To the west of the Shepherds' Field is Bethlehem, heralded by Micah with a pronouncement of the Messianic hope. Situated on the rolling Judean hills, this little town is surrounded by fertile valleys and olive groves, true to its Hebrew name—house of bread. Unspoiled as yet by the encroachment of modernization, the city is reminiscent of the simple birth of the child who came down to share our fragile humanity. Today Bethlehem is Christian, but it is also Arab. Its location on the West Bank makes it vulnerable to frequent riots and Israel's violent suppression of the occupied territories.

Christmas in the Shepherd's Field has a special appeal. With two friends, I was preparing to celebrate Christmas Eve at the Shepherd's cave. From Tantar, where we stayed, Bethlehem loomed, against the darkened sky, sharp and clear, like a child's toytown, with neatly built creamy flat roofed houses. We walked along rows of almond trees and vineyards. Crisp cold air sighed through tall pine trees. If history is accurate, Mary and Joseph should have travelled along this road on their way to be enrolled in Bethlehem.

At Rachel's tomb, the road lingered as if it needed a rest. Thereafter it continued straight and then forked to the left. The street sign read 'Manger Road'. The shops were all closed. Franciscan friars in their brown habits were hurrying past us. The Church bell pealed from afar. The Greek Orthodox priests in black gowns and black beards walked pensively up a cobbled lane. The Bethlehem bus station was almost empty. Again we turned left into the countryside of Beit Sahur, where Ruth once gleaned in Boaz's barley field. The houses were modern and newly built. There was no sign of Christmas.

The sky was overcast as we entered the Shepherd's Field. Dressed in a loose woollen garment and a head gear, an Arab man was lingering by. His flute seemed to blend with the soft groaning of the hillside. There is no sign of festive cheer, we enquired the young man. 'We are not celebrating Christmas. Bethlehem suffered the worst under Israel's occupation', came the sad reply. 'This little town of Bethlehem has never known any peace', continued the man. 'That is why the Jews are still waiting for the Messiah.'

December in Bethlehem is cold, but seldom has the sparkly snow of Western Christmas cards. Seeking

protection from the wintry breeze, the people huddle into the cave for warmth and light. Joyfully we sang carols, old and new. The preacher stressed that it is significant that the news of the Saviour's birth was first announced to the shepherds; for Jesus called himself a good shepherd. Outside it was raining. A native shepherd came rushing into the cave with a snowy white lamb folded in his arms. At the close of the service, when greetings were exchanged, the preacher called out after the manner of the shepherds of old 'Let us go over to Bethlehem and see . . .'. We joined the crowd not wanting to miss the mass at St. Catherine's Church.

Bethlehem was crowded two thousand years ago, declares the Gospel. So crowded was it, that Mary and Joseph could not find a place in the inn. Now Bethlehem was again crowded with tourists who had come to witness the Christmas pageant at the place of Jesus' birth. The Manger Square was ringed by Israeli soldiers, with automatic weapons. On one side of the Manger Square was the beginning of a market place. Next to it was a row of souvenir shops, now all closed. To the left, was the Nativity Church. At the podium of the Manger Square, choirs from different parts of the globe were carolling the good news to the world by satellite. They sang, in different style, of the birth of the manger, of a star in the sky and of peace on earth below.

As we stood in line outside St. Catherine's Church with the entry ticket in hand, the memory of the earlier service at the Shepherd's Field was already fading out. In that cave, the celebration was spontaneous. Here in Bethlehem, every detail was carefully planned; here were the festivities and formalities. Led by the drumming Boy Scouts, the local officials, including the mayor of Bethlehem and the military governor marched in procession into the Church followed by a host of priests. At midnight, the pealing of the church bells announced the glad tidings of the birth of Jesus; and the choir burst forth, 'In Excelsis Gloria'. Christmas had begun.

When the mass at the Church of St. Catherine was over, we stepped into the adjacent Nativity Church. Here again, the Israeli soldier, examined us before letting us through the Door of Humility into a large hall. There was nothing ornamental in the hall except for four rows of brown columns. At the end of the basilica was the altar area richly decorated with icons and hanging brass censers. On the right, a flight of marble steps descended into the Grotto of Nativity. Silver and gold lamps hung from the stone roof shedding a soft radiance over the cave, where the Word became flesh. In rushed reverence we knelt before a silver star around which was inscribed in Latin 'Here Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary'. We trembled as our hearts were opened up to the infinite love manifested in that place. Here our hope was renewed. Bethlehem, the seat of history's momentous birth, now stood as the symbol of a new birth, of new dreams and visions. For Christ is born not just in the manger of Bethlehem but also in our humble human hearts.

Towards a Meaningful Harvest Celebration

REV. ARUN KUMAR WESLEY, Bangalore

Time to Rejoice

Harvest is a time of joy and celebration of God's bounty to us. It is a time of reaping the fruits of our labour in the fields of cultivation, talent, intuition and resources. Although it may sound far removed from the life of us living in cities and towns from the very specific form of cultivation and reaping, harvest has its impact on all of us.

Time to Reckon

Harvest is also a time of reckoning—a time to look back on the amount of time and energy along with the resources invested on the field with the aim of achieving a set goal or target beneficial to us. In that it is a cumulative aspect of responsible stewardship. Thus it is not only a time to look back and around but also a time to look to the future to see to the usefulness of the harvest celebration.

Time to Restore

Harvest is also a testament to God's universal blessings in the fields of labour without which the harvest celebration is meaningless to us. The gift of life and resources by God's munificence has then to be acknowledged and that too in a way possible reciprocated in the celebration.

Harvest has been for time and ages an occasion to celebrate the fertility of the field, a time to reckon, a time to acknowledge God's blessings to us.

The Bible speaks of this in specific terms. That is our celebration and acknowledgement of God's gift to us is to be in accordance with His word. Our harvest celebration will be meaningful to us as long as we acknowledge God's presence with us. That amounts to recognising the presence of God's people with us. It means then that in our acknowledging God's presence with God's people with us we share with God's people in joy and celebration.

In the Bible we see a God of bias. He is prejudiced towards the welfare of the poor and the needy. This does not mean that he does not care for others. He identifies with those who suffer at the hands of others, who are exploited, who suffer to bring about peace and love, who identify with those persecuted for Christ's sake. He is with those who are deprived of their dignity, health and even basic necessities of life. He wants us to share with these the bountiful gifts we have received from God.

The Church in India has a grand tradition of celebrating harvest true to its surroundings and environment. This not only speaks of its integrity but also of its assimilation and synthesis of the harvest or the fertility celebrations in the multi-religious setting. Harvest is celebrated in the church during the months of July to October. Sometimes it is a weeklong cele-

bration with revival meetings, film shows etc., climaxing in the Sunday service. The worship is conducted in a befitting manner as an annual thanksgiving festival. The church is tastefully decorated with the first fruits of the field and the articles donated are dedicated to God with thanks, which are auctioned after the service. The money realised thus from the sales and thank offerings are towards a welfare project or a useful ministry in the church. In some traditions in India, for Christians, it is a homecoming at harvest. It is a family reunion.

Harvest as mentioned in the scriptures is not without its implications for our celebrations today. In order to illustrate this I have chosen a few verses at random from the Old Testament.

1. Lev. 23 : 22

'And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field to its border, nor shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest; you shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I am the Lord your God.'

First of all the observations at harvest are commanded by God as seen in the last part of the verse and also as seen in verse nine. The assertion, 'I am the Lord your God' as a command, is seen in the parallels of the incidents when Moses is urged to speak to Pharaoh and to the people (see Ex. 7 : 2, Deut. 32 : 46, Deut. 15 : 15).

Secondly, we notice the *gleaning* at harvest. The field should not be harvested clean of all its yield. One should leave out some to the *poor* and the *stranger*. God seems to be biased towards these people very openly. These are the people who do not probably own any land and may not belong to the place, being strangers. God is implying in this that 'the earth is the Lord's', for the fact implied in the scriptures is that the land belongs to God, we who 'possess' the land are only the custodians—the farmers who till and tend the land and exploit it for the fruits of the field so that it is shared also by those who do not possess it (see Lev. 25 : 23).

2. Lev. 19 : 9, 10

'When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field to its very border, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the Lord your God.'

Here again the gleaning part is extended to the vineyard as well. God commands his people to leave some for the poor and the sojourner at harvest. Note the word 'fallen' grapes (cf. Mt. 15 : 27, Mk. 7 : 28—the crumbs fallen from the table).

Gleaning the left overs from the field at harvest, has vast implications to the harvester and to the poor as joy and plenty are shared (see Deut. 24:21, Ruth 2:7, Jer. 6:9).

3. Deut. 24:19-22

'When you reap your harvest in your field, and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow; that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. When you beat your olive trees you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow. When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not glean it afterwards; it shall be for the sojourner the fatherless, and the widow. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this'.

In this passage the scriptures seem to elaborate on the 'poor and the sojourner' to include the *fatherless and the widow*. Once again the land of harvest is elaborated to include the fields of cultivation and the vineyard but also *olive trees* implying the harvest and thus the produce of not only the land but of all our efforts.

God once again urges the reaper not to go back to the field to retrieve a forgotten sheaf at harvest. Because it shall be for the fatherless and the widow.

God urges the reaper to leave the 'sheaves and the boughs' to the needy that the *Lord may bless him and the work of his hands*.

Finally, God reminds the reaper of Israel to recall to his memory of his past, that he himself was once a slave (poor and exploited?), a stranger (in Egypt, a sojourner?). Then *this* is bringing up the rear with a command. God thus seems to be urging, persuading and commanding the people to remember the poor at the harvest, reminding them that they themselves were 'poor' once in a strange land.

Now that the Israelites are 'free' and 'own' lands, they are to use their 'freedom' responsibly to alleviate the sufferings of the poor in accordance with the command of God. Could it be that we can extend the implication of the word 'slave' to ourselves, as and when we did not know Christ we were and are 'slaves': slaves to sin, to the sin of greed, exploitation, acquisition at the expense of the poor?

4. I Sam. 6:13

'Now the people of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley; and when they lifted up their eyes and saw the ark, they rejoiced to see it'.

In order to gather the meaning of this verse we ought to read the chapters 4 to 6. Briefly then, Israelites had waged war against the Philistines in which the Israelites were defeated and also lost the possession of the ark of God to the enemy. This was a great blow to the morale of the Israelites as the ark represented God's presence (I Sam. 4:22).

When the Philistines could not keep the ark with them they returned it to the Israelites, particularly to the people of Beth-shemesh when they were reaping the

wheat harvest. Seeing the ark, it brought light and life to these reapers of the harvest. They rejoiced at the ark being returned which meant that once again God's presence was with them, at harvest.

The dreary and tedious reaping had a meaning to the reapers as the presence of God was felt amidst them in the possession of the ark of God. And so they were happy.

5. Jer. 8:20, 21

'The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. I mourn, and dismay has taken hold of me.'

Here the Prophet representing the Lord laments over the desolation of his people. 'The harvest is past and the people are not saved'. Is the saving grace-God's salvation or healing to be seen in the harvest? The prophet identifies with the wounds of the people 'I mourn', is translated in some versions as 'I am black'. Here the mourning or the identification of the people being exploited (black) with the Lord is reminiscent of the parallel with other prophets of the Old Testament which reaches its climax in the New Testament where Christ represents the suffering humanity (cf. Mt. 25:31-46, Acts 9:4-5).

We recall very well the next verse, v. 22 about the balm in Gilead, but do not recall what preceded it. Thus the prophet laments for his people as the presence of the Lord at harvest was not felt to bring healing, salvation and joy to the people.

6. Ruth 1:22]

'So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.'

The tiny book of Ruth tucked between the megatomes of Judges and the mighty Samuel presents us with a very pastoral dormant story of a woman, unknown so far, being incorporated into Israelite history. The book of Ruth presents us with a classic example of the fulfilment of the implications towards the poor and the stranger as commanded by God at harvest. I urge you to read the whole book to get the clear picture of the setting of the story of Ruth.

In brief, it is a story of a *widow*, a *stranger* (Moabitess) who braved all odds, misfortunes, and by sheer coincidence was gathered up to receive recognition and the blessings of the Lord. This then is a typical example of the fulfillment of God's love towards the poor, the stranger, the sojourner and the widow as seen in the personality of Ruth.

The verse, 'they came to *Bethlehem*, at the beginning of barley harvest', although might mean several things, basically it could mean that she was in safe hands of God's reckoning. To return to a strange land with the mother-in-law to start a new life, not only speaks of her spirit of adventure but also the venture of faith and risk she took which is nothing short of a 'leap of faith'.

Later, Ruth goes to *glean* in the field of Boaz, a relative, a *kinsman* of Elimelech, the father-in-law of Ruth.

(Continued on p. 19)

Educational Challenges

MR. MICHAEL VIJAYARAO, *Giddalur*

strides of progress made in general, technical, scientific and professional education since independence is considerable. Nevertheless, it would only be true that we recognise the magnitude of the educational challenge we need to face.

Qualitative deficiency, lack of intellectual integrity, commercialisation, inadequate job-orientation, intermittent emotional outbursts against English, the chasm between the urban and rural based educational institutions and the inadequate ethical content in the texture of our educational fabric are the challenges.

That the quality of education has been severely impeded is an irrefutable fact. It is a grave obligation only on the part of the Central and State governments but it ought to be the concern of the educationists to be educated as well to analyse the causes for the decline in the academic standards and to evolve and to implement measures to enhance appreciably the educational standards in the country. The habit, acquired, of pillaging the dismally poor academic attainments in the rounds of the preponderating numerical strength of the students and the financial constraints must be

the pyramid of education, the base is the most neglected one and is the weakest. Pre-primary and primary education need greater attention.

Operation Black Board has its effect most perceptibly. A great deal has to be done to equip schools at all levels specially primary schools in the rural

Notwithstanding, the many teacher-training institutions in the country, there is a scarcity of competent devoted teachers. The role of a teacher as a friend, counsellor and philosopher is much diluted.

Coaching centres, guides and coaching centres have weakened the zeal of the student for learning and mitigated his endeavour, leading him to adopt surreptitious means to succeed in the examination.

Attitude and ability which are the pre-requisites for entry to portals of higher learning as envisaged by Mahatma Gandhi in his Commission have not been met. Our universities abound not only with those lacking in intellect and industry but also with undesirable elements. Further the autonomy of the universities is eroded.

Dr. Karve lamented as early as in the 50s about the decline of intellectual integrity in our universities and the decline in our academic standards. Has there been any qualitative improvement in our academic attainments? There have been instances of malpractices adopted on a large scale and even manipulation of results.

Frustration and disillusionment seem to haunt many at a Scientific Research Centre. The zeal of the researcher is often dampened. Some could not refrain from committing themselves to tragic ends.

Another distressing feature is that education has assumed apprehensive dimensions of commercial enterprise. There has been a mushroom growth of teaching shops. Self-styled educational institutions have been masquerading as Convents, Public Schools and Universities and deceiving with impunity the unsuspecting.

Capitation Fee and Donations have become contributing factors to gain admission to educational institutions. The deserving poor are thwarted while the financially sound but academically not so are encouraged to grab the opportunities of professional education. To that extent social justice is hindered and professional excellence is floundered. The bravado about the abolition of capitation fee are merely futile salvos. In a socialistic pattern of society where social welfare and social justice are the goals, equality of educational opportunity should not be eroded by monetary considerations.

Socially Useful Productive Work and National Service Scheme are well-meant to promote dignity of labour and inculcate aptitudes. Notwithstanding, the merit of these schemes, the essential need to diversify education into streams of vocational, general and academic excellence should be effected at the end of the middle school. The emphasis on practical work in professional colleges is of a high priority. Coordination between industries and universities is of utmost importance. The award of degrees should be subjected to a stipulated minimum of work experience. Involving the youth in reclamation, afforestation, flood control and fencing the border and thereby providing them employment are efforts worth the trial.

The intermittent outbursts against the teaching and use of English and the passionate reaction of the zealots averse to English is of a singularly discordant note in educational progress and intellection. The advantage of the knowledge of English for well over two centuries is not to be discarded impulsively under false patriotic upsurge of certain segments of leadership and people. In fact, there is an ever increasing demand for learning English. In a Republic like India with a sound constitution which provides fundamental freedoms those who endeavour to seek excellence in science and technology through English medium cannot be impeded.

Our education seems to be one of a two-tier variety. The one which is qualitative and is more for the urban affluent. The other is quantitative and intended to

(Contd. on p. 9)

The Candles Still Burn

New Year's Eve silent celebration in Romania was in distinct contrast to the rest of the world's jubilation.

Romanian TV showed a simple candle burning in silence as the minute hand passed over the top of the clock to mark the beginning of a new decade of the 90's.

Romania was entering into a totally new era after the execution of dictator Nicolas Ceausescu. The government is now in the hands of 'The National Salvation Front'.

The revolution that overturned one of the most repressive governments in the world was unthinkable only weeks before Ceausescu's execution on December 25, 1989.

The people are calling it 'God's Revolution' because there was little hope of never overthrowing this once powerful government.

Weeks before there were many demonstrations, churches of all denominations were calling the people to fast and pray for the overthrow of the Ceausescu government, as it was a government that was clearly anti-God and one of the most unjust systems in present times.

Every Sunday for the month of November, 1989, Christians of all denominations were fasting and praying, aware of the radical changes that had taken place in Poland, Hungary, East Germany and Czechoslovakia.

Ceausescu's power lay with the special Security Police who were trained to be loyal to Ceausescu to death. Even the army had little control, for example soldiers were only allowed to have 3-4 days of ammunition at any one time.

But the Security Police had most of the country's arms, the best guns and the best radio communications, and they numbered 60,000 (mostly in plain clothes) compared with 100,000 army regulars.

The spark that began this revolution began with the resistance of Rev. Lazlo Tokes, a Reformed pastor in Timisoara, a city estimated to have a 25 per cent evangelical Christian population.

Tokes was openly critical of human rights abuses by Ceausescu and his government. The church bishop of the area, who was appointed by the government, demanded to have Tokes moved to another city.

Tokes' people stood by him when he refused to move. Finally the Security Police came to physically move him on December, 13, 1989, but swarms of people in the thousands gathered around the pastor's home so that the police could not get through this human barrier.

At this point the resistance moved from a religious conflict between church and state into a national social conflict between the people of Romania and the Ceausescu government.

Students started to protest with the church members. The demonstrations finally moved from the pastor's home to the large square in the centre of Timisoara.

The crowds grew to the size of 200,000 people in a protest. The odds were against the people—they would cost them bloodshed and even lives.

Finally the Security Police opened fire on the crowd. Near the square is a cemetery where the police made a mass grave for the hundreds that were gunned down.

This was the first of the mass killings that ignited a spark that inflamed the rest of the country to rise against the government.

Days after the shock of this violent attack there was one of the most moving demonstrations in the Timisoara Square. Children came out with burning candles to show their remorse for those killed only hours before in further slaughter.

The Security Police fired on the children, killing some of them. Eye witnesses were horrified as the Security Police continued to fire as parents went to pick up their children, some died with their children gripped in their arms.

The hail of bullets did not stop the people. In the square of Timisoara, the people came streaming back into the square of Timisoara. Again there were up to 200,000 out in the bitter cold.

This time an university professor spoke to the people from the steps of the Opera Hall. At the conclusion of his speech against the injustice of the government he said 'Our only hope is in God'. Then he told the people to turn and face the opposite end of the square where there is an Orthodox Church.

He ran through the crowd and got up on the steps. With the people on their knees he led them in the Lord's Prayer.

One church elder in the crowd later said, 'This God's revolution as the whole nation was literally crying and praying out to God'.

'The whole crowd was deeply stirred as the pastor said it all and that they hoped against all hope.'

The turning of the tide came when the army said they could not stand back and watch their own people being slaughtered. Thus they turned against the Security Police.

Christian organizations have been some of the first to respond with food and medical care. Even with all there are problems, like Romanian hospital staff not being able to read the language on medical supplies and labels.

Romania is a very needy country with many problems to overcome, food shortage, oil/gas for heating. But the people have removed their one main obstacle, Ceausescu. There is hope for Romania as the hope burns within the hearts of the people.

...Richard Wurmbrand spent 14 years in Romanian
for his faith and heads Christian Mission to the Com-
munist World.

In this report from his sources in Romania, he gives
the details of the Christian involvement in the major
demonstration in Timisoara described by Dick Healey:

From the balcony of the Opera hall, a Baptist pastor
and Dugulescu and a Pentecostal spoke, both calling
on the people to lead a non-violent fight for liberty.

A leaflet with a song was distributed. It had been
handwritten or produced on a typewriter, then copied
and recopied by those who received it. It was sung by the
multitude—thousands of believers and unbelievers sang
together.

*We live at the end of an era.
With fights, hate and war.
We look toward a happy heaven,
It is not very long
and the Lord will return to us.
He comes again, He comes again,
What an unspeakable joy.
It will be the end of bitter pains.*

The crowd of tens of thousands knelt and prayed. This
song has now spread all over the country and has been
called the Song of the Revolution.

A poem by the great Romanian Christian poet, Con-
stantin Ioanid entitled 'God Exists' was read. People
shed tears, Ioanid was won for Christ by my son,
Michael. This was a strange thing—Ioanid was a member
of an anti-Jewish organisation, the Legionnaires. God
made a Jewish boy, Michael, to bring Christ to the Jew-
ish. He became an exquisite Christian poet.

Former Communists are now in the leadership of the
country in Bucharest, but in the provinces leadership
is to a great degree in the hands of children of God.

Brethren speak about a real Christian revolution. In
Bucharest, when the army confronted tens of thousands, two
Orthodox priests climbed on a tank and appealed for
peace.

Soldiers and demonstrators on both sides knelt and then
dispersed. This ended the bloodshed in that place.

Doctors Link Up

Dr. Keith Sanders, Secretary of the International Chris-
tian Medical and Dental Association, spent a week in
Romania in February.

Dr. Sanders attended a meeting there when 300 Chris-
tian doctors formed a Christian Medical Fellowship then
and there.

'They are better Christians than we are. Baptists,
Catholics, Pentecostals, Greek Orthodox, Brethren and
others. They get along together with no problems,'
Dr. Sanders remarked.

Great Thirst For Bibles

Senior officials of the Orthodox Church in Romania
have talked with the United Bible Societies to discuss more
avenues of co-operation.

The UBS have supplied the Romanian Patriarchate
with paper, printing film and book binding material for
years.

The Patriarchate plans to reprint 12,000 copies of the
Holy Bible that sold out almost immediately when
published in 1988.

While handing out Scriptures in the city of Cluj in
Romania, Bible Society staff member Robert Horan was
mobbed by people eager for God's Word. Said Horan,
'It was incredibly moving to see people hungrier for
Scriptures than for food or medical supplies.'

*The restoring of the people and land of Romania has
only started. Aid is still going into Romania from Christian
groups mentioned here, and others, and no doubt will for
some time. But Romanians will remember it was Christian
organisations who brought in the first aid.*

(Contd. from p. 7)

meet the needs of the rural poor. The former mono-
polises the opportunities, life can afford, while the latter
merely avails the meagre facilities very marginally.
Can education of quality be the prerogative of the
affluent alone?

The chasm between the urban rich and rural poor
in the field of education ought to be closed expedi-
tiously. This is not to be achieved by lowering the
standard of the former as some anger and prejudice
filled minds seem to desire but by raising the quality
of the latter to the level of the former. This great
divide in the quality of education should be brought
to an end as early as possible. There is no denying
that the task is stupendous.

Ethical content has not been adequately woven into
the texture of our educational fabric. To know the
truth and to uphold the truth, one of the objectives
of education, is yielding place to double think and double
speak.

The clear stream of reason has lost its way into the
dreary desert sand of dead habit. How else can we
account for the mob initiatives that brush reason aside
and lead to violence and destruction? How else can
we accept, acquiesce and sanctify a social practice
abolished about a century and half ago? How else
can we explain obscurantism? How else can we ex-
plain expediency nudging away principle in public
life?

Breathing a breath of introspection is most appro-
priate in order to make a determined bid to face the
educational challenges of our time.

(Contd. from p. 6)

With deft moves of Naomi, Ruth lands up with Boaz,
and Boaz is compelled in a way by the ensuing circum-
stances and traditions prevailing then, to redeem the
land of Elimelech and thus in turn, Ruth.

In turn Boaz becomes the precursor of the future
kinsman redeemer in Christ, by buying the land and
along with it the possession of Ruth.

Thus, the implications of the harvest, in leaving the
gleanings for the poor, the widow and the stranger;
the incorporation of the stranger and the sojourner
into the mainstream of life as kinsman, and in redeeming
Ruth from obscurity into the royal lineage of David and
thus of our Lord, was complete in the story of Ruth.

This being so, as we celebrate harvest, let us remember
its implications in sharing our joy and the fruits of the
harvest with those among us who are poor and needy
that our celebrations may be meaningful to us and on
the less-privileged, and thus bring God's blessings upto
all of us.

"WE ARE THE PEOPLE"

On the Reunification of Germany

DR. E. C. JOHN, UTC, Bangalore

The union of the two German States, the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) and the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) on October 03, 1990 was an event of great historic significance. This historic event marked the end of the post-war era. The high point of the celebrations at the government level was the public meeting on October 03 at the West Berlin Concert Hall. Richard von Weizsaecker, the President of West Germany, delivered the main address. It was hoped that Gorbachev, Mitterrand, Mrs. Thatcher and Bush would also address the festive assembly. But as they were not able to come they were represented by their respective Ambassadors. The reunification was celebrated all over Germany from the second to the fifth of October. In Leipzig Professor Kurt Masur, the conductor of the famous Gewandhaus (concert hall), conducted the 9th Symphony of Beethoven on October 02. Hardly a year ago this great public figure had joined the reform movement in Leipzig led by the New Forum and this gave a great moral support to the struggle for freedom and change. A united worship of Protestants and Catholics was held in Berlin. This was particularly appropriate as the churches in East Germany during the last eleven years have been very active in preparing the way for a peaceful liberation from the oppressive communist regime.

It may be recalled that U.S.A. and Russia had given the green signal concerning the reunification proposal and the agreement was adopted by the West German and the East German parliaments earlier this year. The introduction of West German currency (DM) into East Germany on July 01 and the withdrawal of East German currency has been an important step in the reunification process. On September 12 the external affairs ministers of the four great powers of U.S.A., U.S.S.R., U.K. and France signed in Moscow the final agreement for the union of the two Germanies in the presence of President Gorbachev, the West German external affairs minister Genscher and Lothar de Maizière, the Prime Minister of East Germany. They signed one more agreement on October 01, in which it will be a sovereign state and the Four Powers will no longer have the rights of occupation from October 03. The articles of the agreement insist that the present boundaries of the Federal Republic and the German Democratic Republic will be the fixed boundaries of the united Germany, that only peace shall come from the German soil and that Germany shall not produce or keep atomic, biological or chemical weapons. The agreement includes regulations regarding the withdrawal of the occupying armies and the stationing of the German army. There are also provisions for the continuing of the military manoeuvres of the allied forces.

The West German political leaders have made it a point to state in public that the united Germany will not be a Fourth Reich. Helmut Kohl, the Chancellor of West Germany, spoke at the convention of the youth wing of his party (Christian Democratic Union) in

Leipzig stressing that the Germany of the future will not be the national state of yesterday. He was referring of course to the Third Reich. The Chancellor of the Social Democratic Party, Lafontaine, expressed the view that 'Germany is only a provisional concept' and that it should not understand itself as a power at the centre of Europe, but rather as playing the role of a mediator in the process of the emergence of a united European community. It is appropriate that both the political leaders from West Germany strike the same note in view of the possible fear of the other European countries about the new Germany because of past experiences.

Economically reunification is a costly process in West Germany. Large sums of money have already been given to East Germany to help it recover from economic ruins. The total aid set apart by West Germany to Russia is 12 billion DM of which 7.8 billion would be spent on housing for the Russian occupying army who would all be leaving gradually from East Germany by 1994. The restoration of the economy of East Germany, the modernisation of industry, measures to correct the disastrous environmental situation, renovation of a large number of buildings which have been left uncared for during the last four decades, need to solve the growing unemployment etc., all this would require heavy financial outlay. During the recent visit to Leipzig a friend pointed out to me several buildings which are either in complete ruins or inhabitable at all and said with great distress and pain that those buildings were not destroyed in war but allowed to go to ruins in the peace time! The West German firms and industries have already worked out plans for expanding their spheres of operation in East. The prosperous West German economy will be able in due time to complete the restoration and reconstruction process, no doubt. But will the misery of the suffering masses in many countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America receive adequate attention is a question which is rightly raised. As far as development aid given by or through the churches and church related organisations are concerned assurance has been given that this will in no way be reduced or diverted to East Germany or Eastern Europe.

The events in East Germany, especially in Berlin, Leipzig and other large cities during the autumn of 1989 are unbelievable. One is also amazed at the speed with which the reunification plan has been worked out. Many changes have already taken place. A visitor to East Germany will not fail to recognize them. The halting of the trains at the boundary for a long time, the suspicious search by the police and the fear that instill in the travellers, the compulsory exchange of 1 DM for 25 for each day of stay in East Germany have all been changed. Adherence to the communist party ideology was necessary for all government appointments. On the part of those young people who undergo the youth dedication ceremony of the party instead of the church confirmation service were preferred for admission to

versities. These and other types of strictures have been removed.

The united Germany has many issues before it that need to be solved, some more complex than others. For many years after the division of Germany, West Germany had regarded Berlin as the capital and Bonn only as the seat of the government. Should this not continue or should not Berlin be both capital and the seat of the government? Opinions strongly differ on this point. The process of the union of the different political parties in the West with their counterparts in the East, mergers of other organisations and structures of national dimension require quick action. There are some problems pertaining to East Germany alone. What about the whole apparatus of the state security and its department of secret police which were notorious for the terror unleashed on people? What about the millions of files prepared on citizens by the security organisation and kept in East Berlin? Discussions have begun about the need to remove officials, professors and others occupying high positions who have either been assisting the state security forces or secret police or have been appointed mainly because of their commitment to party ideology. Legal action has already been initiated in cases where there is evidence of assistance given to the state security in their criminalities. It should be pointed out that to act on the basis of political motivation and ideology rather than the merit of the case or on democratic norms has been a pattern under the communist regime.

The Frankfurter Allgemeine newspaper dated September 14, 1990 reports that about two-thirds of the people in East Germany are becoming more and more unhappy about the present situation. In January of this year they were more optimistic. Now they have to pay

higher prices for the groceries, the house rent has increased and there is great fear of unemployment. The rise of the cost of living was of course anticipated with the change of currency. Already in May shops were clearing their stock of articles produced in East Germany through special sale to make room for imported goods from West Germany. Initially the change was welcomed, as people could now purchase articles which they could not buy before, e.g., plantains which had become almost a symbol for what had been out of their reach for so long, fashionable clothes, luxury goods etc. Whereas one had to wait for ten years to get even the cheaper Trabant car, unless one had foreign money, now the people can buy it on the spot. The possibility of travel abroad has become a boon, especially for those whose relatives are living in West Germany. However with all this a sense of uncertainty about the future is also to be observed in conversations with the people.

It ought to be emphasised that those who were pioneers in the freedom struggle last year were not in the least thinking of capturing political power nor of reunification of the two States. The detailed chronological accounts of the liberation movements in Berlin and Leipzig which have been published make it absolutely clear that what the originators of the freedom movements like the 'New Forum', 'Democracy Now' and those who joined them wanted was participation in public life and not to have to submit quietly to whatever the States and Party machinery does or propagates. The people wanted to regain their legitimate right to speak and to express their opinions and to make the State and Party understand that disagreement does not mean opposition. The people did not want to accept any more the lies propagated by the State of Party nor to have to give the impression that they believe their propaganda.

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CSI Day at Stuttgart

BISHOP RICHARD LIPP, Germany

In early years, after my return from India, I used to attend the CSI Day at London. It is held every year on the last Saturday of September at the YMCA House in Fitzroy, London, in remembrance of the Inauguration Service of CSI in the Madras Cathedral in 1947.

Since I was the only Lutheran in India to join CSI, I felt rather isolated here. Therefore I tried to arrange a similar function under different circumstances in Stuttgart, Germany. In cooperation with the Indian Secretary of EMS (the successor organization of Basel Mission), we invited friends to an 'Indian Day'. This attempt proved to be a success from the very beginning. Every year 30 to 60 people, who show real interest in the affairs of CSI, gather together on this day. Whenever possible we have at least one Indian Church leader in our midst, and when circumstances permit we celebrate the CSI Liturgy. The first gathering took place 12 years ago with the Rev. W. Gengnagel, the then Indian Secretary of EMS. About one year ago this friend of CSI died, far too early, and I would like to write this line in remembrance of him, also on behalf of CSI.

It was a good idea of the present Indian Secretary of EMS, the Rev. R. Scheuermeier, to arrange for this year's meeting a programme in connection with the visit of the Rev. Dass Babu, Media Director of CSI, on his way to U.K., in cooperation with the Media Director of EMS, the Rev. K. Zoller. We sang Karnataka songs and realized how much Indian music is appreciated. With pictures we joined in an Indian form of meditation and prayer.

Since deputation work for missionary activities is mostly done here with slides, a few sample slides were shown, and all present joined in a lively discussion as to whether these photos were suitable for transmitting a true picture of India today. With Mr. Dass Babu present and several missionaries, who had been in India, the discussion was most instructive. He presented the VELCOM programme with the help of posters and slides.

We in Europe are in danger of drawing a picture of India, which shows it as a materially poor country, thereby rousing the sympathy of the spectators to make them willing to render material help. There was a missionary present who had been in India before the war, who visited India again in 1980. He said he realized with astonishment what tremendous progress India had made in every field. India today is a country capable of producing every technical innovation which a modern nation requires; and in many things, as also in its moral standards, India sets decadent western civilization a good example.

I think we were all impressed on this occasion by the great differences which exist between God's people in the Church in India and in the Church here in Germany. Whenever we meet we should respect each

other as God's people. As Christians we should be prepared to share our gifts with each other, which means giving and receiving. 'With deep roots and firm foundations, may you be strong to grasp, with all God's people, what is the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of Christ...' (Eph. 3: 17,18, New English Bible)

* * *

'CHURCH'S MISSION AND DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES FOR THE NINETIES'

The Unit II (Evangelistic and Social Mission) and National Development Advisory Council of the NCCI together with the Synodical Board of Social Services of the CNI organised a workshop for the Northern and Central regions on the theme 'Church's Mission and Development Priorities for the Nineties' at the Christian Council Lodge, Nagpur from 30th August to 1st September 1990. Forty participants attended the workshop.

Bishop Vinod Peter of the CNI Diocese of Nagpur conducted a Bible Study on 'Theology of Human Development'. Bishop Nirmal Minz of the North West CELC Ranchi and Mr. R. K. Sail of RCDRC, Raipur presented papers on 'Church in the Context of Neo-Nationalist Era'. The Rev. Dr. Satish Gyan of the Leonard Theological College initiated a discussion on 'Congregation in Mission' which was followed by a paper by Bishop A. Chandu Lal of the CNI Diocese of Amritsar on 'Role of the Congregation in Development'.

At the end of a very fruitful time of discussing and searching for relevant paradigms for Mission and Development, the participants adopted a statement primarily addressing themselves and the churches at large. It is as follows:

'We, the participants in this Consultation affirm that the Church is a communion of people engaged in act of hearing, accepting and acting forth the Calling of God. We affirm that God is the Creator and Preserver of the Cosmos and that God has been, is, and shall continue to be active in the lives, histories and cultures of the people. We affirm that God has created man and woman with the purpose of being God's stewards. But we confess that we have not been responsible stewards of God's creation and have knowingly and unknowingly been participating in its destruction. We also confess that as Church and as congregation we have allowed the sinful structures to control our lives and destiny, and admit our failures in not supporting various forces which have been working for the liberation of the struggling people.'

While affirming and making our confessions, we understand and see the Mission of God in terms of God's redemptive plan for all creation as manifested through the ministry of God's Son, Jesus Christ. This ministry of Repentance, Reconciliation and Renewal, with special bias for the dehumanized and the unpeopled,

the calling of the Church today. Such a calling must involve the Church in the task of 'Development', which has a special meaning and content for the Church, and contains the following priorities :

1. To highlight and propagate those Biblical passages, paradigms, stories, messages, which express God's command to the Church to develop into a community of revitalised and transformed people, constantly attempting to realise God's love and justice, righteousness and peace among all beings and for all creation, through the courage of faith and the strength of God's Spirit.
2. To become a living witness to the redeeming and liberating love of God revealed in Jesus Christ in all aspects of life. This witness needs to question both the content and the methodology of our witness which at times alienate us from our history, culture and people.
3. To invest our liturgies and modes of worship with new content which express hope for those who struggle against inhuman and death-dealing forces and programmes.

4. To constantly question and evaluate all structures within and outside the Church, and participate dynamically and creatively in a continuous process of deconstructing and restructuring so that neither people nor the Church become captives to laws and codes, to manipulations and control, but are radical in their freedom from uniformity and conformity.
5. To engage in an act of questioning the consumeristic lifestyle propagated by industry and technology, thus taking away the freedom from people to make a conscious choice for an authentic lifestyle.
6. To subject ourselves to experimentation so that in a changing society the Churches also changeable and flexible.
7. To participate in peoples' movements so that the process of freedom of equality is made manifest in all spheres of human existence, from family life; through village and community; to the under world of economic and political activities'.

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Application on plain paper with detailed resume of age, education, training, work/senior level experience, salary now drawing and expected salary etc., should be mailed to the General Secretary, Bible Society of India, 206, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bangalore-560 001 to reach him by 31st January 1991.

MADURAI-RAMNAD

A FORETASTE OF 'CANBERRA-AUSTRALIA'

MRS. KASTURI POTHIRAJULU

As the Churches around the world are looking forward for what will happen at the World Council Assembly of Canberra 1991, the Women's Fellowship of Madurai and Ramnad Diocese organised a Women's Gathering to reflect on the assembly theme 'Come Holy Spirit Renew the whole creation'. About Five Hundred (500) women engaged in Higher Education gathered in the Fish-shaped Cathedral at Madurai on 10th November 1990 and had a different experience of a Retreat.

The programme included a talk on the world perspective of how different nations pray to the Holy Spirit for the renewal of God's creation in their local context, such as, the people of the Pacific Islands praying for a nuclear free zone, the people of Africa praying for human solidarity, women of Philippines praying for human dignity culminating in the cries of people in India for the removal of social evils like caste, dowry, burning of women, female-feticide and asking for the strength of the Holy Spirit for the development of Health and Literacy in Rural India.

The speaker pointed out how the leaders like Jesus Christ, His mother Mary and John the baptist, in obedience to the Holy Spirit, worked for the cleansing of the society which provides a model for ministry today. (Ref: Luke 1: 51-53; 3: 4; 10-14; 4: 18,19; Matt. 26: 35, 36; 7: 21-23).

Another talk was based on the relevance of the work of the Holy Spirit in day-to-day life with special reference to teaching profession. It called for dedication to profession and renewal of attitudes. The Bible Study came from an Ordained Woman Presbyter, working as a teacher, who brought out theological understandings of the work of the Holy Spirit in terms of new creation with a special emphasis on the formation of a New Community which is characterised by its caring, sharing and serving values. The next talk came from a Diocesan Missioner for Ecology who is also a Science Teacher. She brought out the Church's role and participation the renewal of the whole creation in its ecological aspects, as the work of the Holy Spirit.

The sharing of experiences of Diocesan Women Representative of a Synodical programme of visit to the North-East Indian Presbyterian churches, was another feature of significance where she brought to light the concerns of those women in the church and the society.

The afternoon session was the time for group presentation in songs, skits and role plays, based on the 9 fruits of Holy Spirit which gave an opportunity for spontaneous expression from the whole gathering. A noteworthy feature of this retreat was that all were women speakers and they were chosen from among Diocesan Women's Fellowship. The participants enjoyed the depth of thoughts from the speakers who had a sound Biblical foundation and theological orientation. The conference ended with a time of making of new covenants for specific action in future, in obedience to the work of the Holy Spirit, in the process of the renewal of the whole creation in the local context.

MADRAS DIOCESE

Indian Fostership

During the children's Festival 10 former KHN beneficiaries now residing at Bharathapuram near Chingleput have come forward to support a poor child by paying Rs. 175 every month through the CSI-CCC Central Office, Bangalore. They are:

S. Prasath
A. Sagayaraj
P. Abaranjithan
K. Gajendiran
S. Yesu
R. Jeyakumar
R. Balasubramani
L. Ganarathy
M. Palayam
V. Arul.

These Ex-foster children who belong to our Diocese, studied at Melrosapuram and Madurantakam hostels. At present they have secured Government employment and are well settled in life. In order to express their gratitude to KNH and our Diocesan hostels they have involved themselves in this great ministry.

SERVICE AND SACRIFICE

(One Day Retreat for CSI Technical Students Hostel Children at Guindy on 13-10-1990)

A Day-Retreat was organised for the hostel children on Saturday the 13th October 1990 at Guindy from morning 9 a.m. till 4 p.m. Rev. George Stephen, Director of the Diocesan Youth Board and Rev. John Bunyan delivered challenging messages on the theme for the day 'Service and Sacrifice'.

First, the Rev. George Stephen stressed that service without sacrifice is not true service, and, that service without self is real service. He pointed out that Jesus is the only model for us: since he started his service in his youth and sacrificed his life for the oppressed and the whole world without any differentiation among cast and community, his service was for the whole world. He urged that so also we must forget self and extend our service to the world, especially to the oppressed and the down-trodden.

Rev. John Bunyan in his message showed that while anyone can render social service only those who accept Jesus and follow his foot steps can offer sacrificial service. Jesus humbled himself and set an example to the disciples as to how to sacrifice self and serve others. Like him we too must be bold in opposing social injustice and help the poor and oppressed people in our villages. We must use our talents for the welfare of the discriminated and deprived in our villages and help them to come up in life.

Competitions such as Essay Writing, Bible Quiz, Poetry and debates were conducted for the hostel children and prizes were distributed by the Warden Mr. Ebenezer.

The One Day Retreat was a blessed day for our children. We were stimulated by the speakers to think of the findings of the poor and their own responsibilities to them.

M. YESUPATHAM
Acting Manager, Guindy

KARIMNAGAR DIOCESE

The C.S.I. Hospital and with it the whole Diocese suffered a great loss, when God called home the Medical Superintendent, Dr. G. Alexander John, B.A., M.B.B.S. on 10-10-1990 in his home.

He was the eldest child of the Rev. G. T. Prasadam, M.A., West Godavari District. The parents had dedicated him to the service of God, so the father hoped to train him as pastor. But inspired by the example of a dedicated Malayali lady doctor in their village, John was determined to become a doctor. He eventually won the permission of his father and trained in Visakhapatnam. In his senior House Surgeoncy he went to C.M.C. Hospital, Vellore. From there he came in March 1955 to Karimnagar and helped to build-up the efficiency of the hospital. In 1966 he took over as the Medical Superintendent and also Diocesan Medical Secretary. 26 years later leaving for Germany in 1981 we worked happily together. Not only the hospital, but also the various committees of the Diocese, on which he served, benefited from his clear thinking and wise council. He was not a man of many words. But when he spoke, it was worth listening. After his retirement Dr. S. Prabhucharan was his successor, but alas, only for one year, because Dr. Prabhucharan could not resist the tempting offer of work in the West Indies. Then the Diocesan authorities requested Dr. John to come back as Honorary Medical Superintendent. He responded to that urgent call, even though his health was not the best. And he laboured on conscientiously through all the many difficulties from outside and inside. The hospital would have had to be closed as so many other church hospitals, had it not been for Dr. John's unstinting efforts to win a way through all problems.

Our sympathy goes out to his wife, children and relatives, who mourn the loss of this devoted head of the family.

—DR. CHRISTA KUPFERNAGEL

Unique Distinction

Mr. L. Ramachandran, the Telugu Pandit at C.S.I. High School, Alair, of the Karimnagar Diocese, has been nominated to be on the Academic Senate of the Kakatiya University, in April 1988.

—G. JAYANAND

KARNATAKA NORTHERN DIOCESE

OBITUARY

With a deep sense of sorrow and grief we report the tragic news of the untimely death of Mr. John James Manjan. John met with a car accident and died in the M.C. Hospital, Hubli the following day. He was working as the office superintendent of the diocesan office of the Karnataka Northern Diocese. He was also training to be a deacon in the Synod Diaconal Programme. In the death the diocese has lost an honest, sincere and hard working person.

John has left behind his wife Theresa, son Deepak and daughter Sonia.

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1. 3-day work-shop on Evaluation of School Textbooks in the Perspective of Social Justice for Tamilnadu Region

Mr. A. Gunaseelan, M.A., M.Ed., Headmaster, Voorheese Higher Secondary School, Vellore and Member of the Education Council organised the programme at Vellore as Regional Convener. The venue chosen was Arcot Theological Seminary, Vellore. Rev. Rufus Jayakumar, Director of the Seminary took Bible Studies and also provided all the infrastructural facilities for the efficient conduct of the work-shop.

I would like to make a special mention of the excellent input made by Dr. B. J. Prashantham, Director of Christian Counselling Centre, Vellore for the benefit of the participants of the work-shop. He led a discussion on: 'Psychology of Success'. Dr. Prashantham outlined the behavioural modifications of students and teachers with reference to the following four basic attitudinal patterns of people:

1. I am OK, you are *not* OK
2. I am *not* OK, you are OK
3. I am *not* OK, you are *not* OK
4. I am OK, you are OK

He also discussed the five Components of the Psychology of success in a person's life with a number of illustrations.

- * DESERVE
- * DESIRE
- * DREAM
- * DISCIPLINE
- * DIMENSION

Rt. Rev. Dr. R. Trinity Bhaskaran, Bishop, inaugurated the workshop.

The following were kind enough to give their time for the workshop as Resource-Persons.

- (i) Mrs. Ethel Bhaskaran
- (ii) Dr. Christy, M.Sc., Ph.D.
- (iii) Miss Dora Boomstra
- (iv) Miss Rani Mercy Bai
- (v) Mr. I. J. Rajamanickam, M.A. (Ohio), M.Ed.
- (vi) Mr. A. Samuel Augustin, M.A., M.Ed.
- (vii) Mr. W. J. P. Sathiyamoorthy, M.A., M.Ed.

The workshop was conducted by the Director of the Education Council. The findings of the study are being finalised by the Regional Convener.

2. CORPED in Madurai-Ramnad Diocese

The Bishop had selected 10 schools in Ramanathapuram and 10 in Cumbum areas. One-day Community meetings were organised on two consecutive days at Schwartz Higher Secondary School, Ramanathapuram and CSI Teachers Training Institute, Batlagundu. The Trainer-Coordination had established very good rapport with the 20 village Communities. Therefore, both the meetings were

very well attended (about 120 people from villages turn up for each meeting.) From each rural Community representatives were selected from the following categories:

Local Congregation	.. 1
S.C. Community	.. 1
School	.. 1
Total	3

A 3-day Training Course on Participatory Educational Action Research (PEAR) for 60 (20×3) Local K. Persons was organised at OCPM Girls Higher Secondary School Compound, Madurai. They have gone back to their villages to do PEAR.

The Bishop and Bishopamma took keen interest in CORPED and participated in all the meetings and Training Course. The Diocesan Coordinator for CORPED, Rt. D. Jesudoss (Deputy Chairman of the Diocesan Council) organised all the programmes with the assistance of Rt. John Kirupakaran, Programme Secretary of Apostolic Leity Department of the Diocese. I must commend highly the excellent way in which the programmes were organised in the Diocese.

The Comprehensive Rural Primary School Educational Development Programme (CORPED) as designed by the Education Council has inbuilt VELCOM thrust. The major aspects are the following:

- * The Local Congregation in the local rural community takes initiative for Community-based Education.
- * The Local Congregation Members dialogue with the local Community members and list out 'the hurts and pains' with reference to the wholistic Educational Ministry of the Church. (This is the *Agenda Phase* of VELCOM).
- * The Local Congregation Members are equipped with skills for doing PEAR. (This is the *Analysis Phase* of VELCOM).
- * The Local Congregation Members organise the fellowship meal for the representatives of neighbouring deprived Communities to reflect the Christian act of love and sharing. (This is the *Agape Phase* of VELCOM).
- * The Local Congregation members (Clergy and laity together) have already initiated work in the Local Communities for better education of their Children. From 1991, for three years, the Local Congregation members will be enabled and facilitated to achieve the aims and objectives of CORPED towards the wholistic development of the poorest of the poor. (This is the *Action phase* of VELCOM).

Dr. W. A. F. HOPPER,
Director



BOOK REVIEW

DAYA KINGSTON SHANTA—'THE DRUG PERIL'—
Commission on Addiction Concerns DSA/UELCI,
Madras, 1990, pp. 80.

The pace of social change in India seem to be greatly accelerated over the past few years. Because of this, there has been a kind of *deregularisation*, both among the institutions of our society as also in the behaviour of individuals. This deregularisation has taken the form of a kind of break down and disjointedness in human relationships. One of the most grotesque symptoms of this malaise seems to be the increasing incidence of addiction of various kinds. It is at this point exactly that our Christian concern becomes crucial. This was the basic rationale for the UELCI setting up the Commission on Addiction Concerns in April 1989. The present booklet is an excellent explication of our Christian concern with the problem, written in plain and simple language; especially highlighting the imperative for the churches and Christians concerned with this social menace.

Daya Kingston is a trained journalist. She has for many years worked with the 'Industrial Times' and CLS. She is presently a free-lance journalist working with the Bible League. She brings to bear in her small booklet, a Christian and motherly concern with the problem

of drug addiction, which is becoming virulent among our youth. The Book has fourteen chapters.

The special merit of the book is the fact that she has very excellently articulated the potential for a pastoral concern and counselling in dealing with this social evil. The illustrations by Daya Kingston are both imaginative and expressive.

The booklet will be of special use to the churches, church elders, pastors and to Christians, who are genuinely concerned with making an adequate expression of their commitment to the Christ, in dealing with this problem. The Concordance for a Counsellor, at the end of the booklet is specially revealing and useful.

Special *kudos* of course, is due to the Commission on Addiction Concerns of the DSA/UELCI and its Director, Dr. K. Rajaratnam. This is the second publication on this area of concern put out by the Commission on Addiction Concerns.

I have absolutely no hesitation in strongly commending this book to theologians, church leaders, pastors and budding candidates for the ministry.

JOHN SUNDERAJ AUGUSTINE, M.S.S., Ph.D.

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NAGALAND.

Sermon Outlines for January 1991

January 1st : The New Year's Day THE DAY OF THE COVENANT

New Year's day is a day when we dedicate ourselves for the days to come during the year. Many of us take decisions to do that and this, so that our life may be meaningful and in turn be blessed by God.

Standing at the threshold of the New Year, let us look back quickly for a review and then look forward for help and guidance.

Bible Passages : Jeremiah 31 : 31-33.
Hebrews 12 : 22-25.
Matthew 11 : 27-30.

Covenant : I. We recall God's part.
II. We remember our part.

I. We recall God's part.

We remember what God has given up.

- (i) Jeremiah 31 : 31-33 : God says : 'I will be their God and they will be my people'.

God's acceptance of us as His people.

- (ii) Hebrews 12 : 22-25 : Divine presence is offered to up.

Reconciliation is a gift of God through Jesus Christ.

- (iii) Matthew 11 : 27-30 : Offer of Jesus—Rest. Rest for our souls liberation.

II. We remember our part.

We promise God—what we will be and what we will do.

- (i) Jeremiah 31 : 33 : We will be His people.

Our commitment and dedication to be His people.

- (ii) Heb. 12 : 25 : Do not refuse Him.
Do not turn away from Him.
Obey His call and follow Him.

- (iii) Matthew 11 : 28-29 : Go to Jesus. Take His yoke and learn from Him.

The day of the New Year bring goodness and happiness.

January 6th : Epiphany

Bible Passages : Isaiah 6 : 1-7
Revelation 21 : 22 ; 22 : 2
Matthew 2 : 1-12

Epiphany is the day that is celebrated as a day of the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles.

In Isaiah 6 : 1-7 we read of God's call to Isaiah where God's holy majesty is revealed.

In Rev. 21 : 22 ; 22 : 2 a vision of new heaven and new earth is given to John.

Matthew 2 : 1-12 : *Adoration of Christ by Gentiles*
1. Birth place of Jesus : Bethlehem.

It was the home and city of King David—1 Sam. 16 : 17 : 12, 20 : 6 etc.

It was already foretold by Micah the prophet that ruler who will be a Good Shepherd of God's people will come from Bethlehem Matt. 2 : 6.

2. The Wisemen

They came from East : they were gentiles : they were later identified as Kings.

When they saw a star they took interest in it and studied about it.

They travelled long to see the King : they made sincere efforts for Christ.

When they saw baby Jesus, they worshipped Him and offered gifts which signified the ministry of Jesus.

(i) Gold : Jesus is the King.

(ii) Frankincense : Jesus is the priest. Jesus opened the way to God for men.

(iii) Myrrh is the gift for one who is to die.

Jesus came to die to save others.

Jesus : True King, perfect High Priest, Saviour.

They, the Wisemen, return by other route. They did not betray Jesus.

9-1-1991 : 2nd Sunday after Christmas

Bible Passages : Jonah 3 : 1-10
Acts 15 : 5-11
Matthew 15 : 21-28

God of All : God for All : The Faith of the Canaanite woman.

What is our theological and philosophical understanding of God? Do we believe in many gods and goddesses? No, we believe in one-triune God.

Do we accept different gods for different people? Do we have my own understanding of God.

God has His own understanding about Himself.

Jews had their own understanding about God.

Jesus' understanding of God was revolutionary which the Jewish people did not accept.

(i) Jonah had his understanding of God. God is everywhere. He can escape from God. God can punish the gentiles. But God heard and did not harm the people of Nineveh.

(ii) In Acts the early Jewish Christians wanted gentiles to undergo circumcision in order to identify themselves with the rest of the Christians. Peter explains the pouring of the Holy Spirit on

'God made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith.'

(iii) *Matthew 15 : 21-28*

A. Jesus

1. Jesus did not answer a word.
2. Disciples urged Jesus to send her away.
3. Jesus said : It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs.

Was Jesus anti to gentiles ? Was His mission limited to the Jews only ? Was He upholding the belief of the Jews ?

No, he was deliberately behaving in that way. He did not stop at that and supported the Jewish ideas of God favouring a particular race and rejecting others.

B. The Canaanite Woman

She came to Jesus because she loved her daughter.

She came to Jesus crying out for mercy.

She humbled herself before Jesus.

She did not take Jesus' words as insult but took them as testing her faith in Jesus.

She was denied the privilege but she insisted for favour, for grace.

C. Jesus

Jesus approved and declared that she had great faith. Jesus granted her request.

Conclusion

Acts 15 : 9 : 'He made no distinction between us and them.'

Acts 15 : 11 : through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved.

We have to proclaim this grace to the Dalits, underprivileged, downtrodden, scheduled caste and scheduled tribes and to those of other faiths.

13-1-1991 : 3rd Sunday after Christmas

Bible Passages : Deuteronomy 6 : 20-25
Ephesians 6 : 1-4
Luke 2 : 41-52.

Growth in wisdom and stature : In favour with God and men

Every Jewish parent was to instruct the children with liberation history—deliverance from slavery in Egypt and bringing them to the land of Canaan. Children were instructed to obey all the decrees of the Lord and fear Him. Their prosperity depended on their obedience to their parents and God. Obedience was treated as righteousness (Deut. 6 : 20-25).

In Ephesians 6 : 1-4 St. Paul says that obedience to parents is a right thing. That is one of the commandments of God.

In Luke 2 : 41-52, we have the record of what happened when Jesus was 12 years' old.

(i) Incident in the temple at Jerusalem.

Jesus was not with his parents—Joseph and Mary. Jesus claims that he is in 'my Father's House'. Wisdom of Jesus at that age.

Even at this young age Jesus knew about His mission and ministry. He was to be with God and extend His Kingdom.

(ii) The days after Jerusalem experience.

It was not yet the time to leave his parents.

Jesus spent his days with his parents where he grew—growth in wisdom and stature—favour with God and men.

Need of today : Healthy society.

Parents help the children to grow not only in good health but with spiritual health. They must be pleasing to God and people.

20-1-1991 : 4th Sunday after Christmas

Bible Passages : 1 Samuel 16 : 1-3
Acts 10 : 34-43
Matthew 4 : 13-17.

Preaching Ministry of Jesus

Jesus spent forty days and nights in the wilderness preparing himself for the ministry. He was tempted by the Devil but Jesus overcame the temptation. He was ready for his public ministry.

In 1 Samuel 16 : 1-3 we read that God instructed Samuel to anoint another person in place of Saul.

In Acts 10 : 34-43, we read Peter telling the people that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth. In that passage he mentions about Galilee where Jesus began his work.

Our passage in Matthew 4 : 13-17, speaks of the time and place of the beginning of Jesus ministry.

A. It was after John the Baptist was put into prison. John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus. Now the public life of John was over. Jesus comes in the front.

Jesus returned to Galilee.

Jesus lived in Capernaum—He left the place where he was brought up.

B. Matthew by quoting a verse from Isaiah depicts the target audience of Jesus preaching :

- (i) people living in darkness.
- (ii) people living in the land of the shadow of death.

C. Christ's ministry was and is :

- (i) to bring great light in darkness.
- (ii) to bring light i.e. life in the land of shadow of death.

D. 'Repent'

This was the key word in the preaching of Jesus. Repent for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.

John the Baptist used this term to prepare the people for accepting Jesus Christ.

Jesus used this term in the beginning of his ministry to prepare people to become participants in the Kingdom of heaven.

'Repent'—call comes as a command.

Repent means 'Turn from your old ways and turn to God'.

Conclusion Taking this as background let us meditate 2 Timothy 2 : 1-7.

We are also given the privilege of preaching the Good News of Jesus Christ. Read Acts 10 : 42.

Lead the people in this Godward movement.

27-1-1991 : 5th Sunday after Christmas

Bible Passages : Exodus 4 : 10-17
2 Timothy 2 : 1-7
John 1 : 43-51

A MISSIONARY CALL AND COMMITMENT
Faithful Servant of the Lord

In Exodus 4 : 10-17, God calls Moses to go down to Egypt and take leadership to bring His people out of bondage. God uses human beings as His instruments by giving them all necessary help and aids.

Moses was to obey. He obeyed and brought blessings to the people.

In John 1 : 43-51 we read about the call of Philip and Nathanael. Calling and bringing others into the ministry. When we are face to face with Christ, we gain strength and special privilege to serve Him.

- (i) Paul has taken Timothy as his son 1 : 2. 2 : 1.
This kind of relationship—not physical but spiritual—is helpful in the ministry.
- (ii) A Missionary has to endure hardships like a soldier. Soldier endures suffering to guard and save the country i.e. save the people.
Soldier of Christ endures sufferings to save others. A soldier pleases his superior—A Soldier of Christ pleases Jesus the Lord.
- (iii) Like an athlete : compete according to rules.
A Christian has to serve the Lord following and obeying the commands of the Master.
A Christian Missionary has no rules of his own but he is the one who is to do the will of his Master.
- (iv) Hardworking Farmer :
Hard working farmer gets good harvest.
A Christian Missionary also works hard in order to receive fruits of his labour.

Remember

It is God who calls us and entrusts us for special tasks. God equips us adequately for the tasks.
We have to be ready to face all kinds of situations in order to fulfil the Mission of God.



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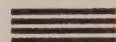
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